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While English scholars and educators are close to unity today, tensions between research and scholarship on the one hand, and teaching and pedagogy on the other, must be continually maintained to achieve distinction in either area. English scholarship focuses upon the literary or linguistic analysis of complexities which have no immediate practical application, whereas English education must promote the essentials of language learning for an educated citizenry. However noble and democratic the ideal of educating all, it has created an acute shortage of quality teacher-power as college enrollments soar alarmingly and as increasing demands are made upon educators to serve outside agencies in their free time. Thus, "radical" choices and new alignments within departments must be made to protect educators and teacher-preparation programs from suffering intellectual extinction in the interests of fraternity and equality. English educators must somehow find the time and dedication for scholarship, imposing upon themselves and their discipline the rigorous and competitive intellectual standards upon which other disciplines thrive. (BL)

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CEE Luncheon Address at 1965 NCTE Convention

ENGLISH EDUCATION AND COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS OF ENGLISH,

By John H. Fisher

This is a significant occasion. The fact that the Conference on English Education should ask the Executive Secretary of the Modern Language Association of America to address its luncheon, that he should accept, and that when he arrived he should find an audience of several hundred, including many of his colleagues from highly selective liberal arts colleges and graduate schools of arts and science--all these are evidence of a new era in our regard for the importance of education in this country. They are but small straws in a rising wind. That the former president of Harvard University should have given a decade to becoming the chief apologist for our public schools, and that the President of the United States should be a former teacher, educated in a state teachers college, are more important manifestations of the same development.

Education with a small e is "in" in this country as it never has been in our history, and it is little wonder that Education with a capital E, which sets the policy, and educators, who run the biggest business in the United States, are coming into the limelight. Between 1961 and 1965 in North Carolina, Governor Terry Sanford turned the improvement of elementary and secondary education into an important political issue. For several years such technical matters as where in school to begin teaching a foreign language or how much in professional education should be required for certifying teachers have been issues in California elections. Upheavals in the internal affairs of such major institutions as Ohio State University, the University of Colorado, and the state universities in Florida have been affected by party politics in their state legislatures. The election of the governor of New Jersey just this month turned heavily upon an issue of academic freedom at the state university. We in education are no longer a separate society. In the familiar phrase of John Donne, we are "a part of the main." Our prejudices, our policies, and our practices have significance for the nation as a whole. Charles Wilson during the war outraged the American public by declaring that what was good for General Motors was good for the United States. I expect there would be less disagreement today that what is good for American education is good for the country as a whole.

This brings us hard up against the question of what is good for education. Certainly money is good for education and I expect that we are all glad that we are getting lots of it and appear to be going to get even more. Unity is also good for education, and it is gratifying--if not always edifying--to see how money is papering over the cracks among us and bringing us before Congress and the public with a unified front from top to bottom and from side to side, even though the essential philosophical differences between the pro- and anti-Dewey factions, and of the socially and intellectually oriented factions have not really been solved. I applaud the ecumenical spirit which brings me before you today, and--as you know--Jim Squire and I have done and will continue to do all we can to promote it.

But today, speaking within the fraternity, I want to expose and probe some of the differences. Our apprehensions on both sides are not baseless. They are grounded in ancient history and in present fact. Yale University and the University of Southern Illinois are not the same and are not similarly regarded throughout the country. Lawrenceville School and the Montclair public schools which my children attend are not the same and are not similarly regarded. While we may at times find it expedient to blur the distinctions between the various segments of our society and the schools which serve them, we should not be taken in by our own generalizations. Genuine respect and genuine cooperation can grow only from honesty and understanding.

You are as aware as I am of the essential basis for the cleavage within our educational system. Almost always before this century, education has been organized to maintain and institutionalize social differences rather than to obliterate them. The Greek idea of liberal education for the free man was an aristocratic ideal, intended to provide a special education for the ruling class. Mandarin education in China, Brahman education in India, and the varieties of lycee and university educations in European countries are but variations of this aristocratic ideal. Only in our century, and most markedly in the Soviet Union and the United States, has there developed a different purpose for education. In these countries it is being used deliberately to obliterate class and regional distinctions, to provide a relatively equal opportunity for everyone. This is a noble ideal, perhaps as noble as man has ever aspired to. But it carries within it the seeds of social engineering, of a democratic totalitarianism of which de Tocqueville was one of the first to warn

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us, but which has been reiterated with increasing emphasis by thoughtful critics throughout our history.

Now I have no intention today of exploring the universal implications of freedom and discipline. I want merely to suggest that the tensions that exist between Educators and Scholars (with capital E and capital S) are part of a fundamental, perhaps the fundamental tension in our society today. This is a tension that I hope will never be fully resolved, for it could be fully resolved only by our becoming a social anthill with color television for all, or else a society of laissez faire in which the able and the ruthless again dominate activity and dictate taste. Let me conclude this section, then, by repeating that I rejoice in the ecumenical spirit of our time and shall continue to work for it. We have had too little of it in the past and we have a long way to go before it poses a threat. But I am under no illusion that ecumenicism can produce complete unity, and I should worry about it if it did. Research and scholarship, and teaching and pedagogy proceed from different premises towards different ends. Both must be nurtured and defended. The calamity is to have either dominate the other.

Let me now make a few specific applications of these generalizations. English Education grows historically out of the state and county normal schools. Some of you, I expect, remember a time when at the end of public elementary school there was a division between those who aspired to college and one of the professions and those who considered their formal education complete and went into farming or business with the expectation of being trained on the job. Since academies and colleges were in the main private and, even when free, required continued support by the family, they were patronized by the children of well-to-do professional classes or by those who aspired to move into these classes. Until the end of the first world war, if I read history aright, American colleges were largely like the European, essentially class-oriented institutions dedicated to training those who were from the upper middle class or who wanted to, and were able to, enter this class. This was neither evil nor depraved. Throughout European history and especially in 19th century America, the educated class was not a closed society. Exceptionally able and determined peasants' and artisans' children, Negroes or American Indians, could move up by going through high school and college, and they did, regularly. But they did so knowing that they were breaking certain ties and entering a new world. The problems and nostalgias of this situation are favorite subjects for art and literature--Christmas cards depicting the city son and his family arriving at the old farm, Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, the novels of John P. Marquand, John Updike's recent Of the Farm: you can think of many other examples.

At a time when a small segment of society maintained itself in, or moved into the middle class by paying to go to the academy and to college, the free elementary schools were staffed by young people who began teaching almost as soon as they themselves were out of elementary school. They frequently received their training in normal schools, supported by the county or state. The normal schools offered summer institutes and arranged their programs so that youngsters could begin teaching only a year or so after they finished the eighth grade and continue their high school education and eventually their college education in the summers and through extension courses through out the rest of their lives. Even today there are still some teachers with life certificates who have not finished college, since it was not until the end of the 1950's that all the states came to require the bachelor's degree for permanent certification. We can see the effect that this history has had upon the national attitude towards teacher training institutions and programs. These programs have been traditionally designed for those who were not able or not motivated, for one reason or another, to take the same kind and amount of training as doctors, lawyers, and college teachers. The reason, historically, is not hard to find. Pay for teachers has been so low that it has been meaningless to compare teaching as a profession with medicine or the law. But there are signs that this situation is changing and it behooves us to see that the tradition and the public image of teacher preparation programs change with it.

Normal schools were a passing phase in American education. Every two-year normal school aspired to become a teachers college and by the end of the second world war virtually all of them had become so. As the pressure to accommodate more students in college has grown during the last twenty years, nearly all of the state teachers colleges have become state colleges or state universities, giving general training in the liberal arts and pre-professional fields, although their concern for teacher preparation remains strong. But the statistics gathered by various agencies and summarized by Dr. Conant make it quite clear a) that most teachers are now being trained in liberal arts programs and in liberal arts institutions, and b) that the programs in English and in other liberal arts subjects at so-called teachers colleges do not differ materially,

at least on paper, from those in the ivy league. To this extent, we are fighting myths, as Albert Marckwardt has observed: the myth of what the academic professor thinks goes on in English Education and the myth of what the English Education professor thinks the academic professor thinks of what goes on in English Education.

But to call these myths again begs the question, because English Education and academic English are different. Echoing the French National Assembly on a more essential subject, I would say, "Vive la difference." English Education focuses upon the essentials of language learning--what the literate citizen needs to be able to do with the language in order to conduct his business, take part in government, and enjoy those avocations in which language continues to play a major role. English scholarship focuses upon literary or linguistic analysis of a subtlety and complexity which cannot hope to have immediate application. Transformational grammar, which we are now eagerly adapting to the seventh and eighth grades, grew out of an effort to write rules that would enable computers to handle transforms in mechanical translation. I am sure that this sort of analysis has implications for teaching, but the original transformationalists are not at all concerned with the eighth grade. They are--and they should be--fascinated by the nature of language itself and the mysteries of the computer. We could make the same generalizations about the new critics or literary historians. I do not need to point out to anyone in this room that there are few who can comb the Public Record Office for data on John Milton, or interview all of Faulkner's friends for a biography, or ponder the implications of rhetoric and linguistics for a new poetic and at the same time visit high school classrooms, help teachers construct new English curricula, and write proposals for NDEA institutes and USOE research projects. There is going to have to be some division of effort and some honest recognition of equivalences in achievement.

The new situation is going to call for new alignments within departments. This year we have nearly a million students entering college (and nearly five million more in college and graduate school), and the estimate is that by 1980 these figures will be doubled. In the Association of Departments of English Vacancy List just published, 600 positions are listed from more than 190 colleges. In the one printed last May, at the end of the academic year, there were 270 vacancies in 116 colleges. Most of these vacancies are professorships in specific areas, not instructorships to teach freshman composition. Who is teaching freshman composition, particularly in the big universities where an increasing majority of freshmen are being taught, it is hard to say. (In the fall of 1964, there were 385,291 beginning freshmen in universities compared with 335,939 in 4-year liberal arts colleges.) I was interested to hear the chairman of a good department at the ADE meeting in Cleveland last year remark that the best way to staff freshman composition is to get in touch with the local Bryn Mawr Club. Other schools I know of are drawing on part-time help from the library, faculty wives, law students, and what have you. As NDEA and other graduate fellowship programs grow in size, there will be a tendency for composition teaching in the universities, at least, to be done by the less able. Conversely, we are making real advances in up-grading the teaching of English in the schools. Nearly 5,000 key teachers attended NDEA English institutes last summer. More than 5,000 more will attend them next summer. Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin, to mention only a few, are engaged in large-scale programs to improve their curricula and teacher preparation. The new curricula being prepared are uneven, and there are vast problems of publication and dissemination. We have yet to find a way really to bring the experience of the academic departments--not only English, but also psychology and sociology--to bear upon Elementary English. Yet I feel that the possibility of improving the teaching of English in the schools is greater than it has ever been in the past, if only we can devote the proper energy to it.

What we face over the next decade in our English departments is an acute shortage of manpower. Not only are our own enrollments rising, but so is the demand for our service by outside agencies. We may soon witness the spectacle of two Federal agencies virtually competing against one another--the USOE providing funds for summer English institutes that will require more than 500 faculty members to staff and administer, and the National Endowment for the Humanities providing summer fellowships to English faculty members who want to spend their time in research and writing. This is quite aside from the trend toward trimesters and other changes in the regular program devised to keep the university running the year round. It may be premature to conclude that freshman composition cannot survive the squeeze. Certainly the need is still there. But for the life of me, I cannot see who is going to teach it competently. And unless it is taught competently, its status will fall even lower than in the past. Such a downward syndrome can only increase our tensions within the profession, and without.

In the past, there has been a natural affinity between those who were seriously interested in freshman composition and those who were concerned with the preparation of teachers and the improvement of the curriculum in the schools. I am sure that many of you in this room share this dual concern, as I do myself. But I say to you now, with all the urgency I can muster, that you face a desperate choice. You are going to have to choose between the hundreds of thousands of students flooding into college and the millions yet in high school. You cannot do both. Rich as our nation is in money and in manpower, we cannot give significant assistance to the schools and at the same time cope meaningfully with the freshmen. As you grow more frantic at this impossible task, you will resent even more keenly the apparent indifference of your colleagues in the upper division courses and the graduate school who refuse to teach in the summer and insist on spending part of each day in the library. But as you chafe, I beg you to remember what college was once about, and what it is still about in almost all departments except English. College was not and is not a place to learn the three R's. If we allow it to become this, it will be a calamity not only for our subject but for American education. Please recall what I said at the beginning of this talk. Higher education has always been selective and intellectually oriented. Woe be to us as a society if we begin to use it as a way to blur intellectual distinctions in the interest of equality and fraternity. Actually there is little danger of our doing this, for the post-sputnik era is seeing increased emphasis being placed upon special opportunities and privileges for the intellectually distinguished. At the same time that colleges and universities take on NDEA institutes, Peace Corps training programs, and AID missions, they grow ever more liberal with released time and special support for scholarship. In the period ahead we could see an even sharper division between the children of Mary and the children of Martha than we have seen in the past.

On other occasions, many of you have heard me speak very directly to my colleagues who think of themselves as scholars about their social responsibilities; so I know that you will not misunderstand me when I say that the course of English Education in the years ahead depends more upon those of you who think of yourselves as Educators than upon them. But you must become willing, as you have not always been in the past, to compete upon the same intellectual terms as other scholars in science and the humanities. It will do no good to say that you are too busy. Scholars must learn to use their increased resources to free themselves to work part-time with Educators and the schools. You must learn to use your increased resources to free yourselves part-time for scholarship. You no longer need to, and professionally you can no longer afford to maintain the traditions of the normal schools, taking on more than you can do well, eking out additions to your salaries by evening and weekend work in extensions and with teachers groups. If you do, you will be regarded like the patient in the psychiatrist's office at the end of an interview: "I'm afraid that I cannot help you with your inferiority complex, Mr. Smith," says the psychiatrist. "The trouble is that you really <u>are</u> inferior."

There are no A's for effort in the intellectual life. There are only A's for achievement. This is something that graduate students find it hardest to learn. A man may spend his life searching for a source or a solution only to have acclaim go to another man who finds the answer--perhaps almost by accident. Of the thousands seeking for a vaccine against polio, only Salk and Sabin found success. If English Education is to play in the major league, it must be willing to compete on the terms that academic scholars have competed on since at least the time of Abelard and Roger Bacon. This is a rigorous and ruthless <u>intellectual</u> competition which will tolerate no sham and no excuses. Walter Loban, Kellog Hunt, Ruth Strickland, and others have shown that research and theorizing of high quality is possible in English Education. Albert Kitzhaber, Walker Gibson, Richard Braddock, and others have shown that work of similar quality is possible in English composition. These are touchstones. Research and creative thinking no longer have to be confined to the fields of literary study. Linguistics has opened vast new vistas, and the psychology of language learning is in its infancy.

What I am inviting those of you who think of yourselves as English Educators to do is to assume your rightful place in the intellectual hierarchy of higher education. You do not have to do so. In the realm of service you operate from a stronger position than ever in the past, with student riots at Berkeley and solemn warnings by foundation and public officials about the flight from teaching to support you. But by espousing service to the exclusion of intellectual achievement, you would cut yourselves off from full participation in a university community which is constantly placing greater emphasis upon--and becoming more sophisticated in appreciating--intellectual distinction. It is reassuring to be reminded, as I look over this audience, that service and intellectual distinction are not incompatible--that the roll of able scholars who are working at English

Education and of English Educators who are making significant contributions to scholarship grows longer every year. May it grow even longer, until it becomes the hallmark of the highest distinction in either area.